



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08185099 6







Arnold

J.K.O.

Digitized by Google







E. Arnold.

The Head & Odyssey  
of India.





THE  
ILIAD AND ODYSSEY  
OF  
INDIA.

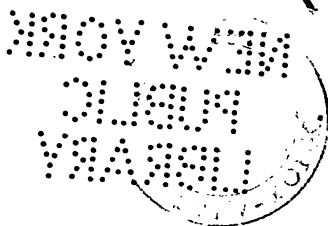
BY  
EDWIN ARNOLD, M.A., F.R.G.S.,

OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF  
POONA SANSKRIT COLLEGE, AND FELLOW OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY.

*(Reprinted, by permission, from the "Daily Telegraph.")*

LONDON:  
TRÜBNER AND CO.

1875.



## THE ILIAD AND ODYSSEY OF INDIA.\*

---

THERE exist two great, two colossal, two unparalleled epic poems in the sacred language of India which were not known to Europe, even by name, till Sir William Jones announced their existence; and which, since his time, have been made public only by fragments, by specimens bearing to those vast treasures of Sanskrit literature such small proportion as cabinet samples of ore have to the riches of a silver mine. Yet these most remarkable poems contain all the history of ancient India, so far as it can be recovered, together with such inexhaustible details of its political, social, and religious life, that the antique Hindoo world really stands epitomized in them. The Old Testament is not more interwoven with the Jewish race, nor the New Testament with the civilization of Christendom, nor the Koran with the records and destinies of Islam, than these two Sanskrit poems with that unchanging and teeming population which Her Majesty rules as Empress of Hindostan. The stories, songs, and ballads, the histories and genealogies, the nursery tales and religious discourses, the art, the learning, the philosophy, the creeds, the moralities, the modes of thought, the very phrases, sayings, turns of expression, and daily ideas of the Hindoo people are taken from these poems. Their children and their wives are named out of them; so are their cities, temples, streets, and cattle. They have constituted the library, the newspaper, and the Bible, generation after generation, to all the succeeding and countless millions of Indian people; and it replaces patriotism with that race and stands in stead of nationality to possess these two precious and inexhaustible books, and to drink from them as from mighty and overflowing rivers. The value ascribed in Hindostan to these two little-known epics has transcended

\* *The History of India from the Earliest Ages.* By J. Talboys Wheeler. Vol. I. *The Vedic Period and the Maha-Bharata.* (London: Trübner & Co., 57 and 59, Ludgate Hill.)

*The Rāmāyan of Vālmiki.* Translated into English Verse by Ralph T. H. Griffith, M.A., Principal of the Benar's College. In Five Volumes. (London: Trübner & Co., 57 and 59, Ludgate Hill.)

all literary standards established here. They are personified, worshipped, and cited from as something divine. To read or even listen to them is thought by the devout Hindoo sufficiently meritorious to bring prosperity to his household here and happiness in the next world; they are held also to give wealth to the poor, health to the sick, wisdom to the ignorant; and the recitation of certain parvas and shlokas in them can fill the household of the barren, it is believed, with children. A concluding passage of the great poem says:

"The reading of this Mahā-Bhārata destroys all sin and produces virtue; so much so, that the pronunciation of a single shloka is sufficient to wipe away much guilt. This Mahā-Bhārata contains the history of the gods, of the Rishis in heaven and those on earth, of the Gandharvas and the Rākshasas. It also contains the life and actions of the one God, holy, immutable, and true, who is Krishna, who is the creator and the ruler of this universe, — who is seeking the welfare of his creation by means of his incomparable and indestructible power; whose actions are celebrated by all sages; who has bound human beings in a chain, of which one end is life and the other death; on whom the Rishis meditate, and a knowledge of whom imparts unalloyed happiness to their hearts, and for whose gratification and favour all the daily devotions are performed by all worshippers. If a man reads the Mahā-Bhārata and has faith in its doctrines, he is free from all sin, and ascends to heaven after his death."

Yet these national poems—the Mahabharat and the Ramayana, the literary palladia of India—remain unknown to Europe, and have never been translated by command of the English Government. Beyond question they should have been. Nothing, in truth, can quite excuse the indifference shown in this default: it is an instance of the want of sympathy in the otherwise grand and admirable administration of British India; but it is a serious instance, for the task was of necessity one unlikely to be performed—if not impossible of performance—except by the encouragement and with the resources of a powerful Government. The treasures of a foreign literature may safely be left to private learning when they appear of manageable dimensions; but these poems, as we have said, are enormous, overwhelming, colossal. They go beyond the grasp of any single mind, it would be thought, however gifted, to exhaust. The Mahabharat contains some two hundred thousand verses; the Ramayana, about fifty thousand. They are poetical encyclopædias in fact, and the British Government might surely have explored and surveyed them like a territory of its Rāj, ordaining their careful translation by some judiciously chosen committee of scholars, Sanskritists, and poets, as a work of actual administrative duty. This would have formed a monument well worthy of

the English name, and the world of science and literature would have been justly grateful; while nothing could have better developed the knowledge of India in England, or reflected greater light upon that mutual origin which is the best hope of future times. All this has not been performed officially; but two men of generous self-devotion and boundless industry have set themselves to the forgotten duty, and their labours have found in the enterprise and liberality of the honourable publishing firm of Messrs. Trübner and Co. the means of seeing light. In justice to this house, which has done so much for the cause of Oriental scholarship, and in order to draw the attention of the Government and the public to the new literary riches that now lie unlocked, we intend in this and a following paper to touch in outline upon the two poems which quite deserve the name we have given them of "The Iliad and Odyssey of India."

The Ramayana of Valmiki, answering most to the Odyssey, has just been completed by the single-handed toil of Mr. Ralph Griffith, Principal of the Benares College. The last volume of this amazing piece of faithful labour has just reached our hands, and when it is remembered that the whole of that enormous epic has been thus at last translated by a single English scholar—amid the constant duties, too, of a most responsible official position, and under the trying rays of the Indian sun—we must pause here to offer to Mr. Griffith the tribute of a sincere admiration. Apart from the poetical and scholastic merits of the prodigious work—which we shall hereafter consider—we thank him in the name of the British people for taking away the old reproach from our rule in India by transferring—canto by canto, to the number of no less than one hundred and thirty—this second great epic poem of the Hindoos into the language of the Rulers of Hindostan. Such a triumph is at once a masterpiece of intellectual perseverance and an honour to Anglo-Indian scholarship; while, we repeat, that to have undertaken the production of so veritable an *opus magnum* reflects much credit upon the publishers who have shared in the task.

We shall return to this marvellous poem, now at last given to the English people, and shall show how, by its study, they may better understand their Indian fellow-subjects. As for the Mahābhārata, even more vast than the Ramayana, it would seem, as has been said, hopeless to expect that any single mind could address itself to the translation of that almost endless epic. A bare transcript into curt and literal prose would occupy about fifteen ordinary octavo volumes, without a note or comment. But, wonderful to

relate, this, too, has been achieved, or nearly so, by a scholar unknown, yet well deserving fame and public gratitude. When Mr. Talboys Wheeler was recently compiling the first volume of his excellent "History of India," a digest of the Mahabharata and Ramayana formed a necessary introduction to the work. While patiently toiling through the summaries and existing extracts of the enormous poem, Mr. Wheeler sent to the Calcutta Library for a translation indexed there as "The Bhagavat-Gita," a mere episode in the epic. The librarian forwarded back a huge MS., much embrowned by age, worm-eaten and faded, indifferently written, and forming about nine thick volumes folio. To the joy of the historian, this turned out to be not merely the interlude whose title was affixed, but the bulk of the Mahābhārata itself, in English, good, true, and terse; and from that MS. thus casually unearthed, Mr. Talboys Wheeler was able to enrich his first volume with the admirable digest of the Mahābhārata, from which we shall mainly quote. No one knows whose patient and untiring brain and pen produced and bequeathed this splendid secret treasure. There is some reason to believe it was the work of Professor H. H. Wilson, whose command of Sanskrit lore was equalled by his wonderful powers of application and enthusiasm for such toil. But this is conjecture only, and we grieve that we cannot pronounce with certainty the name which so well deserves to be coupled with that of Mr. Ralph Griffith as redeeming the British Rāj from the discredit of conquering India, and yet leaving unconquered the two noblest and largest regions of her literature. Thanks to this nameless scholar, whose gentle soul, it may be trusted, reaps unimagined reward elsewhere, "full of the stately repose and the lordly delight of the dead," we possess now a very full conspectus in Mr. Wheeler's History of the Mahābhārata, and in the fair copy which has been made from the old yellow MS. an accurate and almost complete translation. What was wanting in this vast labour, the Baboo Chunder Ghose—an accomplished Sanskritist—translated orally to Mr. Wheeler from the Aryan text; and thus the digest and extracts were fully made which we shall now briefly notice.

The "great war of Bharat" has its first scenes in Hastinapur, an ancient and vanished city, formerly situated about sixty miles north-east of the modern Delhi. The Ganges has washed away even the ruins of this, the metropolis of King Bharat's dominions. The poem opens with a "sacrifice of snakes," but this is a prelude connected merely by a curious legend with the real beginning. That beginning is reached



when the five sons of "King Pandu the pale" and the five sons of "King Dhritarashtra the blind," both of them descendants of Bharat, are being brought up together in the palace. The first were called Pandavas, the last Kauravas, and their life-long feud is the main subject of the epic. Yudhishtira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva are the Pandava Princes. Duryodhana is chief of the Kauravas. They are instructed by one master, Drona, a Brahman, in the arts of war and peace, and learn to manage and brand cattle, hunt wild animals, and tame horses. There is a striking picture in the early portion of an Aryan tournament, wherein the young cousins display their skill, "highly arrayed, amid vast crowds," and Arjuna especially distinguishes himself. Clad in golden mail, he shows amazing feats with sword and bow. He shoots twenty-one arrows into the hollow of a buffalo horn while his chariot whirls along; he throws the "chakra," or sharp quoit, without once missing his victim; and, after winning the prizes, kneels respectfully at the feet of his instructor to receive his crown. The cousins, after this, march out to fight with a neighbouring king, and the Pandavas, who are always the favoured family in the poem, win most of the credit, so that Yudhishtira is elected from among them *Yuvaraj*, or heir apparent. This incenses Duryodhana, who, by appealing to his father, Dhritarashtra, procures a division of the kingdom, the Pandavas being sent to Vacanavat, now Allahabad. All this part of the story refers obviously to the advances gradually made by the Aryan conquerors of India, into the jungles peopled by aborigines. Forced to quit their new city, the Pandavas hear of the marvellous beauty of Draupadī, whose *Swayamvara*, or "choice of a suitor," is about to be celebrated at Kampilya. This again furnishes a strange and glittering picture of the old times; vast masses of holiday people, with Rajahs, elephants, troops, jugglers, dancing women, and showmen, are gathered in a gay encampment round the pavilion of the King Drupada, whose lovely daughter is to take for her husband (on the well-understood condition that she approves of him) the fortunate archer who can strike the eye of a golden fish, whirling round upon the top of a tall pole, with an arrow shot from an enormously strong bow. The Princess, adorned with radiant gems, holds a garland of flowers in her hand for the victorious suitor, but none of the Rajahs can bend the bow. Arjuna, disguised as a Brahman, performs the feat with ease, and his youth and grace win the heart of Draupadī more completely than his skill. The Princess henceforth follows the fortunes of the brothers, and, by a strange ancient custom, lives with them

in common. The Pandavas, now allied to the King Drupada and become strong, are so much dreaded by the Kauravas that they are invited back again, for safety's sake, to Hastinapura, and settle near it in the city of Indraprastha, now Delhi. The reign of Yudhishtira and his brothers is very prosperous there; "every subject was pious; there were no liars, thieves, or cheats; no droughts, floods, or locusts; no conflagrations nor invaders, nor parrots to eat up the grain."

The Pandava King, having subdued all enemies, now performs the *Rajasuya*, or ceremony of supremacy, and here again occur wonderfully interesting pictures. Duryodhana comes thither, and his jealousy is inflamed by the magnificence of the rite. Among other curious incidents is one which seems to show that glass was already known. A pavilion is paved with "black crystal," which the Kaurava Prince mistakes for water, and "draws up his garments lest he should be wetted." But now approaches a turning point in the epic. Furious at the wealth and fortune of his cousins, Duryodhana invites them to Hastinapura to join in a great gambling festival. The passion for play was as strong apparently with these antique Hindoos as that for fighting or for love; "No true Kshatriya must ever decline a challenge to combat or to dice." The brothers go to the entertainment which is to ruin their prosperity, for Sakuni, the most skilful and lucky gambler, has loaded the "compun," so as to win every throw. Says the poet:

Then Yudhishtira and Sakuni sat down to play, and whatever Yudhishtira laid as stakes, Duryodhana laid something of equal value; but Yudhishtira lost every game. He first lost a very beautiful pearl; next a thousand bags each containing a thousand pieces of gold; next a piece of gold so pure that it was as soft as wax; next a chariot set with jewels, and hung all round with golden bells; next a thousand war elephants with golden howdahs set with diamonds; next a lakh of slaves all dressed in good garments; next a lakh of beautiful slave girls, adorned from head to foot with golden ornaments; next all the remainder of his goods; next all his cattle; and then the whole of his Rāj, excepting only the lands which had been granted to the Brahmins.

After this tremendous run of ill-luck, he madly stakes Draupadi the beautiful, and loses her. The Princess is dragged away by the hair, and Duryodhana mockingly bids her come and sit upon his knee, for which Bhīma the Pandava swears that he will some day break his thigh-bone, a vow which is duly kept. But the blind old King rebukes this fierce elation of the winner, restores Draupadi, and declares that they must throw another main to decide who

shall leave Hastinapura. The cheating Sakuni cogs the dice again, and the Pandavas must now go away into the forest, and let no man know them by name for thirteen years. They depart, Draupadī unbinding her long black hair, and vowing never to fasten it again till the hands of Bhīma, the strong man among the Pandavas, are red with the punishment of the Kauravas. "Then he shall tie my tresses up again, when his fingers are dripping with Duhsusana's blood."

We pass over the long episodes of their adventures in the jungle till the time when the Pandavas emerge, and, still disguised, take up their residence in King Virāta's city. Here the vicissitudes of Draupadī as a handmaid of the Queen, of Bhīma as the palace wrestler, of Arjuna disguised as a eunuch, and of Nakula, Sahadeva, and Yudhishtira, acting as herdsmen and attendants, are most absorbing and dramatic. The virtue of Draupadī, assailed by a Prince of the State, is terribly defended by the giant Bhīma; and when the Kauravas, suspecting the presence in the place of their cousins, attack Virāta, Arjuna drives the chariot of the Heir Apparent, and victoriously repulses them with his awful bow *gandiva*. Subjoined is the curious passage relating to the punishment of Draupadī's insulter:

When Bhīma had thus promised to chastise Kīchaka, Draupadī was filled with joy, and agreed to act according to his words; and when the night was over she returned to the apartments of the women, and did her duty as she was accustomed. Now it so happened that after a while Kīchaka paid another visit to his sister, the Rānī; and he began, as his custom was, to set himself off in the presence of Draupadī, and he said to Draupadī, "Raja Virāta cannot interfere with me, for all his affairs are in my hands; if, therefore, you refuse any longer to become my wife, I shall carry you away by my own power, and the Raja will say no more to me to-day than he did yesterday. But if you will accept me as a husband, and enter my house, I will do you no harm; and I will give you a hundred pieces of gold every day, and a hundred slaves and slave girls to wait upon you and a chariot, drawn by mules to be always at your command." And Draupadī answered: "How can I refuse such generosity? but I yield on one condition only. I know that you admit many friends into the apartments of your women, and if my consent should be known unto them, it may bring both you and me to shame. Moreover, I have five invisible Gandharvas who watch over me; and should they discover this matter they will slay you." So it was agreed between them that at midnight Draupadī should grant a meeting to Kīchaka in the dancing-room.

Kīchaka then left the palace, and went to his own house, and his heart was filled with delight; but he was so impatient to meet Draupadī that the remaining half of the day appeared to him like half a year; and when it was night he arrayed himself

in new garments, and perfumed himself with the choicest odours, and he was more replendent than he had ever been before, in the same way that a lamp becomes most brilliant just before it goes out. Meanwhile Draupadī had gone to Bhīma, and told him all that she had done, and Bhīma said that he would slay Kīchaka in such a fashion that no man should discover who had done it. So when the hour of midnight arrived, Kīchaka went in all joy and expectation to the dancing-room, and, seeing in the darkness that somebody was there, he thought it Draupadī, and put out his hand to take hold of her; but at that moment Bhīma arose from the gloom in great wrath and seized him by the hair of his head, and would have dragged him to the ground, but his locks were oiled, and he slipped through the fingers of Bhīma. Now Kīchaka was a warrior of great valour and exceeding strength, and he so fell upon Bhīma that they struggled mightily together, and they fought with their clenched fists, and tore each other with their nails, and strove to throw each other to the ground. And Bhīma was brought to the earth; but he put forth all his strength, and seizing hold of Kīchaka, he whirled him swiftly round his head, and dashed him against the ground and he put his knee upon the breast of Kīchaka, and kneaded him as a baker kneads bread, and pommelled him until the soul of Kīchaka departed out of his body, and Bhīma broke every one of his bones into the smallest pieces, and formed his body into a mere ball of flesh. Bhīma then lighted a lamp, and brought in Draupadī, and showed her all that he had done, saying, "This will I do unto any man that offends you." And Draupadī rejoiced greatly, for she saw that she had been fully avenged.

Then Bhīma departed out of the palace and went to the cook-room, and fell asleep; but Draupadī went and called the watchmen of the palace, saying, "Kīchaka forced me to grant him a meeting in the dancing-room, notwithstanding all my warnings that the invisible Gandharvas would slay him; and behold, when he came to me, the Gandharvas, who are my defenders, fell upon him and slew him, and his dead body is lying there." So the watchmen lighted a lamp and went in, and they beheld the dead body of Kīchaka like a ball of flesh, and they said one to the other, "Surely, no man hath done this. It must be the Gandharvas." And as soon as it was morning there was a great uproar amongst the people, and the whole city was in commotion, for it was said that the mighty Kīchaka, who commanded all the soldiers of the Raja, had been put to death by the Gandharvas, out of his love for a woman. And the brothers of Kīchaka hastened to the spot, and saw the dead body, and desired to take it away to the place of burning; and when they saw all the women of the palace gathered together, their eyes fell upon Draupadī, and they said one to the other: "This is the woman on whose account our brother has been murdered—we cannot kill her, because it is not proper to kill a woman. Let us then burn her with the dead body of Kīchaka, and since he died out of love for her, let him espouse her in the world of Ghosts."

They then went into the presence of the Raja, saying, "We

wish to burn the waiting maid, who caused the death of Kichaka, along with the corpse of our brother." And the Raja was in awe of his wife's brethren, and dared not forbid them; for it is an old proverb that the brother-in-law is master of the house. So they seized Draupadi by force, and bound her with cords, and threw her upon the bier of Kichaka, and went out of the city to burn her alive, together with the dead body. And Draupadi, seeing that her life was in mortal peril, shrieked and screamed in piteous tones, and the air was filled with her cries. All this while Bhîma was lying asleep in the cook-room, when he was awakened by the cry of Draupadi; and he rose up and hastened out of the palace to follow her to the burning ground; and he went to the city wall and threw himself from the ramparts, for he would not go through the city gate lest he should be known.

Then Bhîma drew his hair over his face, so that no man could discover him, and tore up a large tree by the roots, and carried it on his shoulders as a club, and went with all speed to the place of burning. And as he came near, Draupadi saw him, and knew who he was; and when the brethren of Kichaka beheld Bhîma approaching them, they were seized with trembling, and said, "This is the Gandharva; let us fly and leave this woman, who is the cause of all our sorrows." Thus saying, they left Draupadi and the dead body of Kichaka, and fled towards the city, and Bhîma returned to Draupadi and released her; and they went back to the city by different ways, so that no one might know that the Raja's cook was the terrible Gandharva.

After all these evidences of prowess and the help afforded in the battle, the King of Virâta discovers the princely rank of the Pandavas, and gives his daughter in marriage to the son of Arjuna. A great council is then held to consider the question of declaring war on the Kauravas, at which the speeches are quite Homeric, the god Krishna taking part. The decision is to prepare for war, but to send an embassy first. Meantime Duryodhana and Arjuna have a singular contest to obtain the aid of Krishna, whom both of them seek out. This celestial hero is asleep when they arrive, and the proud Kaurava, as Lord of Indraprastha, sits down at his head—Arjuna more reverently takes a place at his feet, Krishna, awaking, offers to give his vast army to one of them, and himself as councillor to the other; and Arjuna gladly allows Duryodhana to take the army, which turns out much the worse bargain. The embassy, meantime, is badly received; but it is determined to reply by a counter message, while warlike preparations continue. There is a great deal of useless negotiation, against which Draupadi protests, like another Constance, saying, "War, war! no peace! peace is to me a war!" Krishna consoles her with the words, "Weep not! the time has nearly come when the Kauravas will be slain, both great and small, and their wives will mourn as

you have been mourning." The ferocity of the Chief of the Kauravas prevails over the wise counsels of the blind old king and the warnings of Krishna, so that the fatal conflict must now begin upon the plain of Kurukshetra.

All is henceforth martial and stormy in the "parvas" that ensue. The two enormous hosts march to the field, Generalissimos are selected, and defiance of the most violent and abusive sort exchanged. Yet there are traces of a singular civilization in the rules which the leaders draw up to be observed in the war. Thus, no stratagems are to be used; the fighting men are to fraternize, if they will, after each combat; none may slay the flier, the unarmed, the charioteer, or the beater of the drum; horsemen are not to attack footmen, and nobody is to fling a spear till the preliminary challenges are finished; nor may any third man interfere when two combatants are engaged. These curious regulations—which would certainly much embarrass Moltke—are, sooth to say, not very strictly observed, and, no doubt, were inserted at a later age in the body of the poem by its Brahman editors. Those same interpolators have overloaded the account of the eighteen days of terrific battle which follow with many episodes and interruptions, some very eloquent and philosophic; indeed, the whole *Bhagavad-Gita* comes in hereabouts as a religious interlude. Essays on laws, morals, and the sciences are grafted, with lavish indifference to the continuous flow of the narrative, upon its most important portions; but there is enough of solid and tremendous fighting, notwithstanding, to pale the crimson pages of the *Iliad* itself. The field glitters, indeed, with Kings and Princes in panoply of gold and jewels, who engage in mighty and varied combats till the earth swims in blood, and the heavens themselves are obscured with dust and flying weapons. One by one the Kaurava chiefs are slain, and Bhîma, the Giant, at last meets in arms Duhsusana, the Kaurava Prince who had dragged Draupadi by the hair. He strikes him down with the terrible mace of iron, after which he cuts off his head, and drinks of his blood, saying, "Never have I tasted a draught so delicious as this." So furious now becomes the war that even the just and mild Arjuna commits two breaches of Aryan chivalry, killing an enemy while engaged with a third man, and shooting Karna dead while he is extricating his chariot-wheel and without a weapon. At last none are left of the Kauravas except Duryodhana, who retires from the field and hides in a chamber under a table. The Pandavas find him out, and heap such reproaches on him that the surly warrior comes

forth at length, and agrees to fight with Bhīma. The duel proves of a tremendous nature, and is decided by an act of treachery; for Arjuna, standing by, reminds Bhīma by a gesture of his oath to break the thigh of Duryodhana, because he had bidden Draupadī sit on his knee. The giant takes the hint, and strikes a foul blow, which cripples the Kaurava hero, and he falls helpless to earth. After this the Pandava Princes are declared victorious, and Yudhishtira is proclaimed King.

The great poem now softens its martial music into a pathetic strain. The dead have to be burned, and the living reconciled to their new lords; while afterwards King Yudhishtira is installed in high state with "chāmaras, golden umbrellas, elephants, and singing." He is enthroned towards the East, and touches rice, flowers, earth, gold, silver, and jewels, in token of owning all the products of his realm. Being thus firmly seated on his throne with his cousins round him, the Rajah prepares to celebrate the most magnificent of ancient Hindoo rites, the *Aśwamedha* or Sacrifice of the Horse. It is difficult to raise the thoughts of a modern and Western public to the solemnity, majesty, and marvel of this antique Oriental rite, as viewed by Hindoos. The monarch who was powerful enough to perform it chose a horse of pure white colour, "like the moon," with a saffron tail, and a black right ear; or the animal might be all black, without a speck of colour. This steed, wearing a gold plate on its forehead, with the royal name inscribed, was turned loose, and during a whole year the king's army was bound to follow its wanderings. Whithersoever it went the ruler of the invaded territory must either pay homage to the King, and join him with his warriors, or accept battle; but whether conquered or peacefully submitting, all these Princes must follow the horse, and at the end of the year assist at the sacrifice of the consecrated animal. Moreover, during the whole year the King must restrain all passion, live a perfectly purified life, and sleep on the bare ground. The white horse could not be loosened until the night of the full moon in *Choitro*, which answers to the latter half of March and the first half of April—in fact, at Easter-time; and it may be observed here that this is not the only strange coincidence in the sacrifice. It was thus an adventure of romantic conquest mingled with deep religion and arrogant ostentation, and the entire description of the *Aśwamedha* is most interesting. The horse is found, adorned with the golden plate, and turned loose, wandering into distant regions, where the army of Arjuna, for it was he who led Yudhishtira's forces, goes through twelve amazing ad-



ventures. They come, for instance, to a land of Amazons, all of wonderful beauty, wearing armour of pearls and gold, and equally fatal either to love or to fight with. These dazzling enemies, however, finally submit, as also the Rajah of the rich city of Babhru-váhand, which possessed walls of solid silver, and was lighted with precious jewels for lamps. The serpent people, in the same way, who live beneath the earth in the city of Vasuki, yields, after combat, to Arjuna. A hundred thousand million snakemen dwelt there, with wives of consummate loveliness, possessing in their realm gems which would restore dead men to life, as well as a fountain of perpetual youth. Finally, Arjuna's host marches back in great glory, and with a vast train of vanquished monarchs, to the city of Hastinapur, where all the subject Kings have audience of Yudhishthira, and the immense preparations begin for the sacrifice of the snow-white horse. This is a passage which, although not perhaps of equal antiquity with much of the epic, may be quoted, for its strange minuteness of ritual and old-world interest.

A golden throne was set up in a high place for Maharaja Dhritarashtra, and beneath that was another throne for Raja Yudhishthira; and thrones of gold and sandal-wood were arranged for all the other Rajas and chieftains according to their several qualities and dignities; and the Maharaja and all the Rajas and chieftains took their seats upon the thrones. And all the wives and other ladies of the Rajas came to the assembly and were arranged and seated on their own side, each one in the place appointed for her. And when all assembled were seated, Raja Yudhishthira and Draupadi bathed themselves; and the space of ground required for the sacrifice was duly measured out, and a golden plough was brought, and two bullocks were harnessed to the plough. Then Raja Yudhishthira rose up, and with his own hand drove the bullocks and ploughed that space; and Draupadi followed the Raja and carried a parcel of all the different grains which were grown in the Raj-Bharata, and sprinkled the grains as fast as the Raja ploughed. And the Bráhmans sat along with the ladies, and whilst the Raja ploughed, both the Bráhmans and the ladies offered up prayers in his behalf with a loud voice. The space of ground was then covered with four hundred golden bricks, and the sage Vyása, accompanied by Vasishtha and Náráda and other Rishis, seated themselves on the golden pavement. The Raja then commanded that eight pillars should be set up round that golden pavement, and a roof covered with gold was set over the pavement, and a banner was fixed on the top of each pillar. Then eight large pits were dug, in order that the *homa* of milk, curds, and clarified butter might be prepared therein, and eight large sacrificial ladles were furnished for casting the *homa* on the sacrificial fire, and large cloths of skin were sown together, on which was placed a portion of every vegetable which is food for man, and a portion of every medicinal herb which was produced in that

Rāj, and the whole was put into the *homa*, and Vyāsa was appointed to be President of all the Brāhman, who were to obey his orders as to the performance of the *homa*. And all the most famous Rishis were present at that sacrifice, and they selected the most distinguished persons to sit side by side of the place where the *homa* was performed. And Raja Yudhishtira sat with a deer's horn in his hand, and Vyāsa desired him to command that sixty-four of the principal Rajas and Rishis in the assembly should go with their wives to the banks of the Ganges, and that both they and their wives should fill pitchers with the Ganges water, and bring it to the place of the sacrifice. And Krishna, and Arjuna, and Bhīma, with a great party of Rajas and Rishis, each one accompanied by his wife, proceeded to the banks of the Ganges, all with pitchers on their heads; and along with them went a company of musicians with drums and trumpets and other musical instruments, and many dancing girls likewise danced before them. And when those who had gone to the banks of the Ganges for water had filled all their pitchers, they took the pitchers on their heads and returned to the place of the sacrifice, preceded by the musicians and singers and the dancing girls. Then Raja Yudhishtira commanded that splendid dresses should be brought for all those who had carried the water, and he caused both the Rajas and their wives to be dressed therewith, and he put a chain of choice jewels on each of their necks, and put a betel nut into each of their mouths, and he ordered fires to be lighted in the pits that were dug for the *homa*, and the various ingredients to be presented to the fire. Then the Raja's brethren and kinsmen brought loads of gold and jewels and clothes, together with many elephants, horses, and cows, and gave to each Brāhman in such quantities that they were all fully satisfied and contented.

After this, a throne made of sandal-wood, covered with gold, was brought for Raja Yudhishtira. And the Raja sat thereon, and those around him took off his clothes, and all those persons who had brought water from the Ganges took up their pitchers and poured the water over the Raja's head. The horse was then brought, and the remainder of the water with which the Raja had been bathed was poured upon the horse's head. Then Nākula opened the mouth of the horse and said: "The horse is speaking!" and those around him cried out: "What does the horse say?" Nākula replied: "The horse says: 'In other yagas wherein a horse is sacrificed, he goes to Swarga, which is the heaven of Indra; but I shall go far above Swarga.'" Then the horse was washed, and the scimitar was brought, and Daumya put the scimitar into the hands of Bhīma, and bade him slay the horse. And Bhīma lifted up the scimitar to give the horse a blow, when Daumya said: "O Bhīma, have patience a moment while I try the horse." So Daumya took hold of the horse's ear and pressed it, when suddenly milk ran out to the astonishment of all present. Daumya then said to Bhīma: "I see that the horse is pure, and I am certain this sacrifice is acceptable and will be accepted. Now strike!" So Bhīma struck a blow and cut off the head of the horse, and no sooner was the head severed from the body than it mounted towards the sky and soared out

of sight, and the body fell down upon the spot. Then Krishna and the other Rajas and the Rishis came up and opened the horse's belly. And when they divided it a light came out of it, and Krishna said: "O Raja Yudhishtira, I have never beheld so clean and pure a horse, and I am now assured that this sacrifice of yours has reached the heaven of Vishnu."

After Bhîma had opened the belly of the horse, the flesh began to smell of camphor, and Daumya took out the camphor-like flesh with the sacrificial ladles, and cast it upon the fire and made *homa* of it, and said: "Indra, take this flesh, which has become camphor." At that moment Indra, with a crowd of gods, entered the assembly. All present then paid their respects to Indra, who came up to Vyasa and took the remainder of the flesh, and gave a portion of it to each of the gods, and the smoke that rose from that fire was all perfumed.

Then Krishna arose and embraced Raja Yudhishtira, and gave him joy of his sacrifice, and said, "Be the sacrifice prosperous; for no one has ever performed the like, and the fame of it will last as long as the world endures." Raja Yudhishtira replied: "All that has come to me has been entirely by your favour." Then Krishna, with all the Rajas and principal Rishis, poured pitchers of water over Yudhishtira and Draupadi, and bathed them. Then all that remained of the medicinal herbs that had been brought to make the *homa* was reduced to powder, and a ball of it was given to each of the persons present to eat; and by so doing Raja Yudhishtira gave to each one a share of the merit of that *aswamedha*, and last of all Raja Yudhishtira partook of it himself. Then all the musical instruments struck up a symphony of rejoicing for the close of the yaga; and Kunti, with all her maidens and dependents, manifested every sign of joy, and bestowed great quantities of goods in gratitude to the gods who had enabled her son to perform so great a yaga, and had accepted the sacrifice. And all the materials for the *homa* were collected into one place, and the Brâhmanas uttered blessings over them and threw them all at once into the fire. And when the Raja had finished bestowing his largesses upon the Brâhmanas, he turned to the Rajas and gave to each a thousand horses of the first quality and a hundred war elephants and one crore of gold coin, and to each of the Rajas' wives he gave everything that was necessary for a bride on her wedding night, including gold and precious jewels and splendid clothes. Yudhishtira then gave to each of the sons and kinsmen and friends of Krishna twice as much as he had given to the Rajas; and the next day Krishna took leave and set off for Dwaraka, and all the other Rajas took leave in like manner, and set off for their respective countries.

After all these stately celebrations, it might be expected that the great poem would conclude with the established glories of the ancient dynasty. But, if the martial part of the colossal epic is "Kshatriyan," and the religious episodes "Brahmanic," the conclusion breathes the spirit of Buddhism. Yudhishtira sits grandly on the throne, but earthly greatness does not content the soul of man, nor can riches render weary

hearts happy. A wonderful scene, which reads like a rebuke from the dead addressed to the living upon the madness of all war, occurs in this part of the poem. The Pandavas and the old King Dhritarashtra being together by the banks of the Ganges, the great saint Vyasa undertakes to bring back to them all the dead, slain in their fraternal conflict. The spectacle is at once terrible and tender. "They all went," says the Mahābhārat:

And the day passed away so slowly that it seemed like a whole year to them, and at last the sun went down, and they all bathed in the river by command of Vyāsa, and said their prayers, and Raja Yudhishtira and his brethren were on the side of Vyāsa, and Maharaja Dhritarashtra stood before them, and everybody else stood where places could be found. Vyāsa then went into the water, and prayed and bathed; and he then came out and stood by Dhritarashtra, and called upon the names of each of the persons who had been slain, one by one. At that moment the river began to foam and boil, and a great noise was heard rising out of the waters, as though all the slain men were once again alive, and as though they and their elephants and their horses were bursting into loud cries, and all the drums and trumpets and other instruments of music of both armies were striking up together. The whole assembly were astonished at this mighty tempest, and some were smitten with a terrible fear, when suddenly they saw Bhishma and Drona in full armour seated in their chariots and ascending out of the waters, and all their armies arrayed as they were on the first day of the Mahābhārata. Next came forth Abhimanyu, the heroic son of Arjuna, and the five sons of Draupadi, and the son of Bhīma with his army of Asuras. After these came Karna, and Duryodhana, and Sakuni, and Duhsasana, and the other sons of Dhritarashtra, all in full parade, seated upon their chariots, together with many other warriors and Rajas who had been slain. All appeared in great glory and splendour, and more beautiful than when they were alive, and all came with their own horses and chariots, and banners, and arms, and every one was in perfect friendship with each other, for enmity had departed from among them, and each one was preceded by his bard and eulogists who sang his praises, and very many singing men and dancing girls appeared with them. Now, when these warriors had come out of the river, their widows, and orphans, and kinsfolk were overjoyed, and not a trace of grief remained among them; the widows went to their husbands, and the daughters to their fathers, and mothers to their sons, and sisters to their brothers, and all the fifteen years of sorrow which had passed since the war of the Mahābhārata were forgotten in the ecstasy of seeing each other again. Thus the night passed away in the fulness of joy, but when the morning had dawned all the dead mounted their chariots and horses and disappeared, and those who had gathered together to behold them prepared to depart. And Vyāsa, the sage, said that the widows who wished to rejoin the dead husbands might do so; and all the widows went and bathed in the Ganges and came out of the water again, and kissed, one by one, the feet of

Dhritarashtra, and then went and drowned themselves in the river; and through the prayers of Vyāsa they all went to the loved ones they wished, and obtained their several desires.

But this revealing of the invisible world deepens the discontent of the Princes, and when the sage Vyāsa tells them that their prosperity is at an end, they determine to leave their kingdom to younger Princes, and to set out with their faces towards Mount Meru, where is Indra's Heaven. If, haply, they may reach it living, there will be an end of this world's joys and sorrows, and "union with the Infinite" will be obtained. We shall imitate, in our last quotations, the shloke or *anushtup* verse of sixteen syllables, in which the original "Mahābhārata" is mainly composed—

With Draupadī and the Princes the King went from the city gate,  
The high-souled sons of Pandu and the famous Princess following them

For life eternal longing, and worldly things all abandoning.  
To many lands they wandered, and hill and wilderness traversed they.

In the front walked Yudhishtira, and next him masterful Bhīma came.

After Bhīma the mild Arjuna, and Nakula and Sahadeva then,  
And sixth came sweetest Draupadī, dark browed and with loveliest lotus-eyes,  
And last came Yudhishtira's dog.

Far they travel together till in the distance is seen rising immense Himavat, and the highest peak of this range, Mount Meru itself, where God Indra dwells. But at this point Draupadī sinks exhausted. She had been faultless in love, but too much attached to things of earth, and her soul accordingly failed in its final task. Then Sahadeva and Nakula fall dying, and Arjuna also; the poet relating at each calamity what earthly imperfections caused thus their want of power to reach the holy mount. Bhīma dies last, guilty of want of tenderness towards his enemies, and none of the princely company now survives but Yudhishtira, the King. He, followed by the dog, strides on towards the abode of the gods, not looking behind him; but, with sad eyes and declining strength, ever pressing towards the place of rest. And here occurs one of the noblest religious apologues not only of this great epic, but, we venture to think, of any creed—a beautiful fable of faithful love, which may be contrasted, to the advantage of the Hindoo teaching, with any scriptural representation of Death, and of Love, "which stronger is than Death." There is always something selfish in the anxiety of orthodox

people to save their own souls, and our best religious language is not free from this taint of pious egotism. The parva of the Mahabharata which contains Yudhishtira's approach to Indra's paradise teaches, on the contrary, that deeper and better lesson—

The gate of heaven opens to none alone.

Save thou one soul, and it shall save thine own.

The good Pandava King has passed all dangers safely, and stands secure, but alone, upon the summit of the holy hill. Suddenly a strain of celestial melody rings through the golden air, and Indra appears in his chariot. "Ascend," the God cries; "my Heaven awaits thee;" but the King replies:

Oh, mighty Indra! yonder there lie joyless all my brothers true;

I cannot enter Heaven and leave those dear lives fallen away from me,

And Draupadi, the sweet-faced one, a king's child, fair and virtuous,

If I go she must enter too. Oh, Indra, have pity on those I loved.

#### INDRA.

In Heaven, Monarch, thou wilt find thy brothers; they all have safely come;

They all are there, with Draupadi; tarry not, then, thou son of Bharat.

Arrived thy kinsmen are and Queen; but so as the dead come have entered they.

Their soiled and fleshly garments doffed; but thou shalt enter living, oh King!

#### YUDHISHTHIRA.

And this dog, too, O Indra, here! 'tis a true beast that has followed me

All the long journey, faithfully; indeed, Lord! I have compassion on it.

#### INDRA.

Eternity and friendship with the holy Gods and felicity

In my high Heaven hast thou this day attained; leave, therefore, the brute to die.

## YUDHISHTHIRA.

The best men do some evil, but the worst love that which loveth them.  
If thy Heaven doth cost so dear a price as my dog's pain, let it lack me.

## INDRA.

On earth, wherever a dog shall come, unholy, are purest sacrifices.  
Leave what is low and base to die; Heaven now will be enough for thee,  
Thou cam'st here, leaving Draupadī — thy brethren all thou cam'st leaving too.  
Stay'st thou, then, at Heaven's door, for a hound? Nay, Monarch, mount and ride quickly.

## YUDHISHTHIRA.

When on yon earth our dead die, neither love nor hate again they feel.  
Neither can ever help them there, else never there had I quitted them.  
Worst of the four great crimes of life is treason done to faithful love.  
This brute hath faithfully followed me; I will to hell if he goeth, Lord!

But the dog was all the while Yama, the God of Death, disguised; and that grim Deity, as he resumes his proper form, praises the gentle-hearted King, and leads the way into Paradise. Yet another trial, however, awaits his perfect virtue, for on entering the jewelled gates of Indra's abode, Yudhishtira beholds the Kauravas, but not his own kinsmen, there; and believing himself deceived, turns away and strides downwards to the gate of Narak, the Bráhmaṇ hell. Outside its dismal portals he is assailed by noisome odours and horrible sights, but he hears the voice of Draupadī inside, and beats fiercely for entrance. As the ghastly porch opens, the foul and murky air suddenly clears, the evil noises turn to exquisite music, hell becomes a dissolving vision—*maya*—an illusion, which gives place to the real and glorious Heaven of the high Gods; and Yudhishtira, thrice-tried and found perfect, obtains immortal bliss for himself and for all those dear to him.

Such is the barest outline of this mighty and ancient poem, which has had far more rapt listeners than ever the "Iliad" or "Odyssey" could boast—which may claim a grander scheme



and higher aims than either, and which in many a beautiful and sonorous passage does not yield in music or invention or majesty to the flow of Homer's own Greek. Outside the main story and its many episodes the gigantic work contains, as an ocean embraces islands, the separate compositions of the Bhagavad-Gita, with the legends of Krishna and the three famous stories of Nala and Damayanti, Devayani and Vayati, and—though this was interpolated—Chandrahama and Bikya. The Mahabharata is, in truth, an ocean of poetry, whose coast-line we have merely indicated, yet we have accomplished our purpose in praising the industry which has summarized it in Mr. Talboys Wheeler's admirable first volume; the spirit which has aided him in Messrs. Trübner's well-known interest in Oriental learning; and the devotion, above all, of that nameless scholar whose toil has sounded for us the depths of this almost boundless sea. We have dipped but a cup or two from its musical wavelets of love alternating with mighty rolling billows of tempestuous passion, and sinking back again into ripples of restful peace and the calm of the dark waters at night. It was our desire, while doing justice to a recent notable work, to convey some slight idea to the English public of this vast antique epic, which to the present hour feeds with by-gone but immortal melody the hearts of all the Indian people. If we have effected this, our purpose is accomplished. In another paper, and on a future occasion, we hope to notice the remarkable translation which Mr. Ralph Griffith, of the Benares College, has achieved from the Sanskrit of that sister-poem of the Mahābhārata—the voluminous Rāmāyana.





*In Preparation.*

In One Volume. Crown 8vo. Cloth.

# THE INDIAN SONG OF SONGS,

FROM THE SANSKRIT OF  
THE GITA GOVINDA OF JAYADEVA.

BY

EDWIN ARNOLD, M.A., F.R.G.S.

(Of University College, Oxford), formerly Principal of the Poona  
College, and Fellow of the University of Bombay.

This is the first attempt to turn the beautiful Sanscrit  
Pastoral of the loves of Govinda (Krishna) and Radha into  
English Verse.

---

LONDON: TRÜBNER & Co., 57 AND 59, LUDGATE HILL.



































































































92

10







**This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building**

[illegible]

EDITH 1919

